

## Book Reviews

compile a plague survey. He carefully marked down which inhabitants had caught the plague, whether they had recovered or not, and if they had left the city. He added a list of the inmates of the hospital, as well as of the families who had died, and of the various tradesmen and councillors. He preceded his account with a survey of the previous outbreaks he had known, attempting to provide statistical data for each. He finished the main draft by July 1611, although small additions were made until 1612.

Dr Lötscher's edition is the first complete publication of these two tracts, which are preserved in manuscript in Basle. As well as a transcription, he has provided a detailed commentary on the *Stadtplan*, recording other house-owners as well as the present state of the property (and it is remarkable how little has changed), as well as reproductions of old printings and photographs. A separate brochure of maps, including the famous "bird's eye-view" Merian map of 1616, enables the streets and houses to be located easily. Finally, the introduction sets out the most significant conclusions to be drawn from Platter's descriptions for the history and topography of Basle, and, to a lesser extent, for medical history. The section on Basle and the plague is more informative than the more general survey of plague, but the close focus on Basle, which is the great strength of this book, also has its weaknesses. The uniqueness of Platter's detailed statistics needs more discussion, as do his sources: personal observations and burial records were used, but it is unclear how far Basle resembled its Italian and German neighbours in its plague organization and documentation. But this is a mere quibble compared with the abundant riches of this volume, which is of prime importance for any historian of plague. One can only regret that the editor did not live long enough to receive the thanks of his readers.

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WOLFGANG SCHNEIDER, *Paracelsus — Neues von seiner Tartarus-Vorlesung (1527/28)*, Brunswick, Braunschweiger Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Pharmazie und der Naturwissenschaften, Band 29, 1985, 8vo, pp. iv, 76, DM. 15.00.

A seventeenth-century Paracelsus manuscript from the editor's possession has here been edited. These are students' notes of lectures given by Paracelsus at Basle University during the winter semester of 1527/28 in German instead of the usual Latin. No other manuscript of this lecture course is extant. A Latin version has been printed twice, one by Adam von Bodenstein in 1536, and one by Johann Huser who used a manuscript from the collection of Montanus in 1589. Schneider comes to the conclusion that Bodenstein's version is the better one, although Sudhoff, the modern editor of Paracelsus, thought Huser's was nearer the original. Schneider also thinks that all versions go back to one student's notebook and were modified only in the transmission, otherwise there would be greater divergencies.

The lectures are a collection of prescriptions for different conditions caused by what Paracelsus calls *tartarus*, a sediment causing constrictions of the arteries and of the chest, calculi, pus, and other complaints. The chief remedy in most cases is the oil of various plants. The remedies were unorthodox because the diagnosis and view of disease was unorthodox, and Paracelsus had to flee Basle for more than one reason.

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